

State Alarmed at Growing Divorce Rate

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District
The foundation of our social and economic fabric is the family unit. This is true for all nations of the world, not only our United States. But the pressures of modern living are putting a very heavy strain on the

family, as evidenced by rising divorce rates, and many other social and economic problems which originate in broken families. Further erosion of family solidarity could be a very serious threat to the well-being of California, and the world. So grave is the situation in

this State regarded that the Assembly Committee on Judiciary, within whose jurisdiction divorce laws fall, held a two-day hearing on the matter. It may be that as a result, the Governor may be asked to include the subject in his call for a Special Session which will

probably run simultaneously with our Budget Session. THE PICTURE with respect to divorce here in California is anything but reassuring. The Committee was told that in this State there is one divorce for every two marriages. This com-

pare with one for every four marriages in the United States. Our nation has the highest divorce rate in the world. It is six times that of our next-door neighbor, Canada; five times that of Great Britain; and four times that of France. The impact of divorce does

not fall evenly over the State, either. In Los Angeles and Sacramento counties, there are more than six divorces for every ten marriages, despite the existence in both counties of effective Conciliation Courts and official marriage counselors. A few other large counties

also have set up Conciliation Courts, but the movement to establish others can only proceed slowly. ONE MEMBER of the Committee said, "Divorce erodes every foundation of our society. It breeds loneliness, frustra-

tion, and despair. Its tragic by-products are crime, alcoholism, and dependency on the state." He indicated that he would urge the Governor to include in the call for the Special Session, the creation of an advisory commission of clergymen, judges, lawyers, psychologists, and sociologists to make an intensive interim study of the divorce problem.

The Committee was informed that three-quarters of our juvenile delinquents, and more than 50 per cent of the inmates of our State penal institutions come from homes broken by divorce. The costs of this situation to all California taxpayers is dramatically highlighted by the fact that a four year prison term calls for three times higher expenses than does a four-year high-school education for a youth in our public schools.

DESPITE THESE startling figures, there was general agreement that not enough is now known about the factors that cause divorce. The effects of the length of pre-marital acquaintance, of age of the parties at marriage, of their education, of income, still need detailed study and analysis, for example.

The Governor has publicly indicated his concern about the divorce problem, and has indicated his sympathetic attitude toward an interim study. So our March sessions may have another big problem to deal with.

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Wage Earners Entitled to State Refund

Wage earners who had more than \$46 withheld during 1963 for disability insurance premiums are entitled to a refund of the excess, according to Albert B. Tieburg, state employment director.

Refunds are not automatic. Persons entitled to them must file the necessary application with the Department of Employment before June 30.

"Estimated refunds during 1964 will exceed \$5 million," stated Tieburg. Approximately 4.5 million California wage earners were covered by non-occupational disability insurance in 1963, and paid one per cent of their first \$4,600 in wages for this special insurance.

More than 245,000 Californians applied for such refunds last year and received checks averaging nearly \$21.

Application forms are available at all Department of Employment offices.

New Housing Development Now Started

Pioneer Development Corp. has announced plans to construct Villa De Los Palos Verdes, a 144-unit residential community in Palos Verdes, on a 10 1/2 acre site which overlooks Los Angeles and Long Beach Harbors.

Current plans, as developed by the architects, Peter Munselle Associates and Tracy Price Associates, provide for 36 4-unit garden type town house structures, based on the condominium concept.

Grading work on the site west of Western Avenue between Caddington and Toscanini drives is currently under way and construction of the first model is planned immediately with completion scheduled for May 1, 1964.

Austria's medieval Tirol Province, site of the 1964 Winter Olympics, is so popular an Alpine playground that residents can usually be seen skiing on their lunch hours.

My Neighbors

"Leave him be, future historians will go wild deciphering 'em"